

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 124217 POSS DUPE
ORIGIN H-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-11 PM-05 SS-15 SP-02 MCE-00
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 /046 R

DRAFTED BY H:EZMCKINLEY/RAFLATEN/EZM
APPROVED BY H:RAFLATEN
NEA/ARP - MR. GERLACH

-----115378 162053Z /73

O 161842Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 124217

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, SA, US

SUBJECT: F-15 SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA

REF: JIDDA 3557

1. SENATORS WHO VOTED FOR F-15 SALE IN FOREIGN RELATIONS
COMMITTEE WERE: DEMOCRATS: SPARKMAN, MCGOVERN, GLENN,
HUMPHREY - REPUBLICANS: PEARSON, GRIFFIN, PERCY, BAKER.

2. SENATORS WHO VOTED AGAINST F-15 SALE (FOR RESOLUTION
OF DISAPPROVAL): DEMOCRATS: CHURCH, PELL, BIDEN,
CLARK, STONE, SARBANES - REPUBLICANS: CASE, JAVITS.

3. FULL TEXT OF SEC BROWN'S LETTER TO THE COMMITTEE ON
SAUDI ASSURANCES READS AS FOLLOWS:

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN:

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DURING RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH YOU AND OTHER MEMBERS OF
YOUR COMMITTEE, A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN RAISED RE-
GARDING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE F-15 AIRCRAFT WE PRO-
POSE TO SELL TO SAUDI ARABIA AND REASSURANCES AS TO THE
PURPOSE FOR WHICH SAUDI ARABIA WILL USE THE AIRCRAFT. I

WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO THESE QUESTIONS AND ATTEMPT TO
RESOLVE ANY UNCERTAINTIES THAT MEMBERS MAY HAVE FELT RE-
GARDING THE PROPOSED SALE.

I. THE F-15 AIRCRAFT

THE F-15 WE PLAN TO SELL TO SAUDI ARABIA WILL HAVE THE SAME CONFIGURATIONS AS THE INTERCEPTOR MODEL APPROVED FOR THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE. DURING THE DEVELOPMENTAL PHASE OF THE F-15, INITIAL PLANS CALLED FOR GIVING THE AIRCRAFT A GROUND ATTACK CAPABILITY. HOWEVER, THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER AIRCRAFT WITH SUPERIOR STRIKE CAPABILITIES LED THE AIR FORCE TO ALTER ITS PLANS AND TO LIMIT THE ROLE OF THE F-15 TO THAT OF AN AIR SUPERIORITY FIGHTER. CONSEQUENTLY, THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW GROUND ATTACK SYSTEMS FOR THE F-15 WAS DISCONTINUED IN 1975.

SAUDI ARABIA CHOSE THE F-15 BECAUSE OF ITS EXTENDED PATROL CAPABILITY AND SUPERIOR AIR DEFENSE CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING AN ADVANCED, ALL-WEATHER AIR-TO-AIR RADAR SYSTEM). THE F-15 BEST MEETS SAUDI ARABIAN REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AIR DEFENSE OF A VAST TERRITORY. IN CHOOSING THE F-15, SAUDI ARABIA REJECTED AIRCRAFT WITH POWERFUL GROUND ATTACK CAPABILITIES SUCH AS THE F-16.

AS SAUDI ARABIA HAS SELECTED THE F-15 TO DEFEND ITS NATIONAL TERRITORY, IT WOULD BE FOLLY, AS THE CHAIRMAN
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DESIGNATE OF THE JCS, GENERAL DAVID JONES, USAF, OBSERVED IN TESTIMONY, TO USE THE F-15 OFFENSIVELY AGAINST NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL, WHOSE AIR STRENGTH IS, AND WILL BE, SO MUCH GREATER. NOT ONLY WOULD THE F-15 BE RELATIVELY INEFFECTIVE IN AN OFFENSIVE MODE, AND THE RISK OF LOSS OF THE AIRCRAFT HIGH, BUT ITS USE AWAY FROM SAUDI ARABIA WOULD LEAVE VITAL OIL FACILITIES, URBAN CENTERS AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS WITHOUT NECESSARY AIR DEFENSE COVER. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF MILITARY PLANNING, IT WOULD MAKE NO SENSE WHATSOEVER FOR SAUDI ARABIA TO ACQUIRE AN AIRCRAFT WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE F-15 WITH AN IDEA OF USING IT AS A GROUND ATTACK AIRCRAFT. I AM CONFIDENT THE SAUDIS HAVE NO SUCH INTENTION. LIKE THE USAF MODEL, THE F-15 FOR SAUDI ARABIA WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH AIR DEFENSE ARMAMENT, NAMELY FOUR AIM-9 SIDEWINDER AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES, FOUR AIM-7 SPARROW AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES AND A 20 MM GUN.

THE AIRCRAFT CAN CARRY THREE EXTERNAL FUEL TANKS, BUT THE PLANE REQUESTED BY SAUDI ARABIA WILL NOT BE EQUIPPED WITH SPECIAL FEATURES THAT COULD GIVE IT ADDITIONAL

RANGE. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLANES WILL NOT HAVE CONFORMAL FUEL TANKS ("FAST PACKS"), I.E., AUXILIARY FUEL TANKS THAT CONFORM TO THE BODY OF THE PLANE, AND SAUDI ARABIAN KC-130 TANKERS DO NOT HAVE EQUIPMENT FOR AIR REFUELING OF THE F-

15.

SAUDI ARABIA HAS NOT REQUESTED THAT THE PLANE BE OUT-FITTED WITH MULTIPLE EJECTION RACKS (MER 200) WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE PLANE TO CARRY A SUBSTANTIAL BOMB LOAD. THE U.S. WILL NOT FURNISH SUCH MER'S, AND TESTING AND CERTIFICATION OF A MER SYSTEM FOR THE F-15 WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE BY ANOTHER COUNTRY WITHOUT U.S. AUTHORIZATION. WHILE AIRCRAFT COULD CONCEIVABLY CARRY THREE STANDARD MK UNCLASSIFIED

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84 BOMBS, THEY WOULD EACH REPLACE AN EXTERNAL FUEL TANK; THIS WOULD GREATLY SHORTEN THE AIRCRAFT'S RANGE AND INCREASE ITS VULNERABILITY. MOREOVER, IN CONTRAST TO THE F-16, THE F-15 DOES NOT HAVE A RADAR SYSTEM DESIGNED FOR BOMBING.

SAUDI ARABIA HAS NOT REQUESTED NOR DO WE INTEND TO SELL ANY OTHER SYSTEMS OR ARMAMENTS THAT WOULD INCREASE THE RANGE OR ENHANCE THE GROUND ATTACK CAPABILITY OF THE F-15.

PURSUANT TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY DISCLOSURE POLICY, CERTAIN HIGHLY SENSITIVE SUBCOMPONENTS OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE VERSION OF THE F-15 (E.G., CRYPTOLOGIC EQUIPMENT AND SOME SPECIAL ELECTRONIC CAPABILITIES) WILL NOT BE SOLD TO SAUDI ARABIA.

IN SUM, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE F-15 WILL HELP SAUDI ARABIA DETER AND DEFEND AGAINST THOSE NATIONS THAT ARE HOSTILE TO ITS ROLE AS A LEADING MODERATE ARAB STATE.

II. ASSURANCES

THE GOVERNMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA HAS ASSURED US THAT IT HAS NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS AGAINST ANY STATE, THAT IT WILL USE THE F-15 AIRCRAFT ONLY IN FURTHERANCE OF ITS LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE, AND THAT IT WILL NOT EMPLOY THE AIRCRAFT OFFENSIVELY. THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT HAS SIMILARLY ASSURED US THAT IT WILL NOT TRANSFER THE F-15 AIRCRAFT TO ANY THIRD COUNTRY OR PERMIT THE NATIONALS OF SUCH COUNTRY TO TRAIN ON THE F-15 AIRCRAFT, SERVE AS PILOTS, OR OTHERWISE TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE AIRCRAFT WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES. UNCLASSIFIED

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WE HAVE SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSED THESE RESTRICTIONS ON USE AND PROHIBITIONS ON TRANSFER WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA. THEY HAVE ASSURED US THAT THEY INTEND SCRUPULOUSLY TO COMPLY WITH THESE PROHIBITIONS AND

RESTRICTIONS. THE RECORD OF SAUDI ARABIA IN THIS RESPECT IS EXCELLENT. HOWEVER, SHOULD THE ASSURANCES BE VIOLATED, THE UNITED STATES CAN TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION, INCLUDING SUSPENSION OF SERVICES AND OF DELIVERY OF SPARE PARTS AND OTHER MILITARY EQUIPMENT. WITHOUT SUCH SERVICES THE USABILITY OF THE F-15 WOULD DEGRADE RAPIDLY.

IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE SALES AGREEMENT RESERVES TO THE UNITED STATES THE RIGHT TO SUSPEND OR CANCEL DELIVERIES AT ANY TIME "WHEN THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES SO REQUIRES.; FURTHER, UNDER SECTION 21(C) OF THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT, NO U.S. PERSON EMPLOYED UNDER FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CONTRACTS IN SAUDI ARABIA OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO PERFORM SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF COMBAT OPERATIONS.

QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN RAISED CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE BASING OF THE F-15 AIRCRAFT AT TABUK AIR BASE. I WOULD LIKE TO REPEAT TO YOU THE ASSURANCE GIVEN TO ME AND OTHER UNITED STATES OFFICIALS BY THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT THAT SAUDI ARABIA WILL BASE THE F-15 AIRCRAFT, NOT AT TABUK, BUT AT DHAHRAN, TAIF AND POSSIBLY AT RIYADH OR KHAMIS MUSHAIT. BASING THE F-15 AT THE VULNERABLE TABUK BASE COULD PLACE IN NEEDLESS JEOPARDY THESE VITAL AIRCRAFT WHICH WILL FORM THE HEART OF THE SAUDI ARABIAN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. IN ADDITION, TABUK IS NOT EQUIPPED TO SERVE AS AN OPERATING BASE FOR THE F-15'S, AND COULD NOT BE SO EQUIPPED WITHOUT EXTENSIVE U.S. ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD NOT BE PROVIDED. THESE PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS, OF WHICH SAUDI ARABIA IS WELL AWARE, STRENGTHEN THE ASSURANCES THAT THE F-15'S WILL NOT BE BASED AT
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TABUK.

THE QUESTION HAS ALSO BEEN RAISED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA INTENDS TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL COMBAT AIRCRAFT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ASSURED US THAT IT DOES NOT INTEND TO ADD TO ITS INVENTORY ANY COMBAT AIRCRAFT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WHILE IT IS PREPARING FOR AND RECEIVING THE SIXTY F-15'S. THE SHORTAGE OF TRAINED PERSONNEL IN SAUDI ARABIA WOULD SEVERELY CONSTRAIN SAUDI ARABIA'S ABILITY TO UTILIZE ANY ADDITIONAL NEW AIRCRAFT BEYOND THE F-15 DURING THIS PERIOD.

WITH RESPECT TO THE SECURITY OF THE AIRCRAFT, THE GOVERNMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA HAS EXPRESSED ITS DETERMINATION TO PROVIDE CAREFULLY FOR THE PHYSICAL PROTECTION OF THE AIRCRAFT, MANUALS AND OTHER MATERIAL RELATED TO IT. PRIOR TO THE DELIVERY OF THE AIRCRAFT, WE WILL WORK WITH THE

GOVERNMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS FROM OBTAINING ACCESS TO THE AIRCRAFT OR INFORMATION ABOUT IT.

THE PROPOSAL WITH RESPECT TO SAUDI ARABIA, LIKE ALL SUCH PROPOSALS, STANDS ON ITS OWN MERITS, AND I HOPE THE FOREGOING INFORMATION WILL BE HELPFUL TO YOU AND THAT YOU AND THE MEMBERS OF YOUR COMMITTEE WILL JOIN IN SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSALS TO SELL AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA.

SINCERELY,
SIGNED - HAROLD BROWN.
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4. THE VOTE IN WHICH THE SENATE REJECTED A RESOLUTION TO BLOCK THE SALE OF JET FIGHTERS TO ISRAEL, EGYPT, AND SAUDI ARABIA (MAY 15) WENT AS FOLLOWS:

DEMOCRATS FOR: ALLEN, ANDERSON, BAYH, BIDEN, BURDICK, CHILES, CHURCH, CLARK, CRANSTON, DECONCINI, DURKIN, FORD, HART, HASKELL, HATHAWAY, JACKSON, KENNEDY, MATSUNAGA, MCINTYRE, MELCHER, METZENBAUM, MOYNIHAN, NELSON, NUNN, PELL, PROXMIRE, RIEGLE, SARBANES, SASSER, STONE, TALMADGE, WILLIMAS, ZORINSKY.

REPUBLICANS FOR: BROOKE, CASE, DOLE, DOMENICI, HATFIELD (ORE), HEINZ, JAVITS, PACKWOOD, ROTH, SCHWEIKER, WEICKER.

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 124217

FOL STATE 124217 SENT QCTION JIDDA MAY 16, 1978 REPEATED
TO YOU QUOTE

UNCLAS STATE 124217

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SINCERELY,
SIGNED - HAROLD BROWN.

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PERCY, SCHMITT, SCOTT, STAFFORD, STEVENS, THURMOND,
TOWER, WALLOP, YOUNG. VANCE UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE124217
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: H:EZMCKINLEY/RAFLATEN/EZM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780207-0006
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197805112/baaaeyqw.tel
Line Count: 526
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8b793895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN H
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 10
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: JIDDA 3557
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2540070
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-15 SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA
TAGS: MASS, SA, US
To: JIDDA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8b793895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
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